
Though as a marker of pragmatic humbleness

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Abbot (2016) and Simons et al. (2010) predict that languages should contain within their inventory an item that marks a portion of the content as not at issue but they do not give an example of such an item. The aim of this paper is to show that the conjunction (*al*)*though* marks what it subordinates as not at issue content. I show that concessive clauses (CCs) may be fully integrated syntactically with the matrix clause; they are central adverbial clauses, but contrary to other CACs their content is not at issue: they can be dismissed, they outscope negation and other relevant operators, they can never be focused (neither informationally nor contrastively) and they can never be an answer to any question. The reason for this is not syntactic. The focal allergy of CCs (and maybe their inherent not at issue-ness) may be derived from the semantic contribution CCs make. CCs express uncauses, inoperant causes: excluding inoperant causes for the benefit of yet another inoperant cause, the point of focusing, is a pointless move, if we communicate to eliminate possible ways the world can be in order to zero in of the way(s) the world actually is. CCs cannot be conceived of as the only true alternative in a focus set.

References: • Abbot, B. (2016). An information packaging approach to presuppositions and conventional implicatures. *Topoi* 35(1), 9–21. • Simons, M., J. Tonhauser, D. Beaver and C. Roberts (2010): What projects and why. *Proceedings of SALT 20*, 309–321.